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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/C AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/10/2016

TAGS:

KDEM, PGOV, PHUM, PINR, RW, BG  
SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ON HOTEL RWANDA, HUMAN RIGHTS  
REPORT AND NEPAD

REF: KIGALI 228

Classified By: PolOff GLearned. Reason 1.4(d).

¶11. (C) Summary. In a 9 March meeting with Foreign Minister Murigande, Ambassador delivered the 2005 Human Rights Report (HRR), discussed Paul Rusesabagina and inquired about the NEPAD Peer Review Report. Upon receipt of the HRR, Minister Murigande was defensive but also appreciative of the Ambassador's personal delivery. He agreed that the report should be used as the basis for a robust engagement between the GOR and Embassy on human rights issues in 2006. Murigande reaffirmed the GOR's position on 'Hotel Rwanda' manager Paul Rusesabagina (reftel) is that he is not the hero he claims to be and genocide survivors are free to voice their negative opinions about him. Murigande said that the formal release of the NEPAD Peer Review Report on Rwanda has not yet been scheduled. End summary.

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Human Rights Report  
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¶12. (SBU) Murigande said that during his tenure as Foreign Minister four USG HRRs had been released but this year was the first year it was delivered to him by the Chief of Mission. Ambassador Arietti noted that there would be parts of the report that the GOR would disagree with but stressed that it was his intent to use the occasion to further deepen the dialogue between the GOR and the Embassy. Murigande agreed, and also stated that the report should reflect the current situation, not a repeat of the prior years with a 'changed comma or sentence'. He also mentioned the Rodney King incident as an example of a human rights abuse in the US. Ambassador Arietti countered the Rodney King case by pointing out that there was a transparent investigation, covered by a free press with the prosecution of guilty individuals. He then explained the drafting process and the congressionally mandated requirement to track issues and cases that had been in previous reports. While still somewhat defensive, Murigande reiterated his appreciation that the report was delivered in person.

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'Hotel Rwanda' Hero  
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¶13. (C) Ambassador shifted discussion to Paul Rusesabagina noting that he was a popular figure in the US and that there is a perception by some people in Washington that there is a GOR campaign to discredit him. (Note. Rusesabagina, the former manager of the Hotel Des Mille Collines in Kigali, is portrayed as a hero who personally saved over 1,200 potential victims during the genocide in the movie 'Hotel Rwanda'. End note). Murigande denied a GOR-organized effort to discredit Rusesabagina, but said that 'people are saying what they know' and are 'not happy' that he is receiving undeserving

status and praise. He said that Rusesabagina has been 'made into something he is not', and that the GOR has every right to defend itself against critics.

¶4. (C) Ambassador pointed out that the timing is a problem as the perception could be that the GOR is just now attacking Rusesabagina due to his high profile and outspokenness against the government. Murigande replied that many survivors have the feeling that Rusesabagina's role was greatly exaggerated in the film and he asked why, if he were a great hero, had he not contributed to a genocide survivors fund.

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NEPAD Update  
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¶5. (U) When asked for an update on the NEPAD Peer Review Report, Minister Murigande stated that Rwanda had wanted to release the report in Addis but agreed to honor a request by the other Peer Review Nations to wait until the next meeting in order to respect the process. (Note. The NEPAD Peer Review Modalities specify that the Report must be formally presented by the Head of State. Although the Review for Rwanda is finished, President Kagame did not attend the AU Summit in Khartoum and President Obasanjo refused to accept the Report from Prime Minister Makuza. End note.) Murigande noted that the report had been distributed to the other member states but the next meeting has not yet been scheduled.

ARIETTI